

that the same well-tested principles used in determining whether or not a complaint is valid for Federal employees and contractors (and some private sector employees) who blow the whistle is used for private sector workers.

Third, the Act establishes a new office within the Department of Labor, which will be dedicated solely to administering whistleblower complaints. Following an investigation by this office, the Act provides an opportunity for hearings before a Department of Labor administrative law judge and final review by the Office of the Secretary. Complainants would also have the right to take their cases to court.

Since the substantive whistleblower protections under OSHA and MSHA are well-established, the Act takes a different approach for those who blow the whistle on safety and health violations. Procedurally, the Miner Act functions at an acceptable level, but the procedures of the OSHA Act badly need an overhaul. So the Streamlining Act would provide complainants under the OSHA Act with the same hearing, final review, and court opportunities as for others. For practical reasons, it would leave the initial investigations to OSHA.

Finally, the bill requires the National Academies to study why some persons or communities are reluctant to step forward and report illegal violations.

We want to encourage workers to come forward and report violations of law. The Private Sector Whistleblower Streamlining Act of 2007 will make it easier for them to do so.

#### RECOGNIZING ANNIVERSARIES OF MASS MOVEMENT FOR SOVIET JEWISH FREEDOM AND FREEDOM SUNDAY RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY

SPEECH OF

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 30, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in support of H. Res. 759, which recognizes two of the most important events in the area of human rights in the twentieth century: Recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally on the Mall in Washington, DC.

I would like to specifically touch on one of the most important aspects of the Jewish struggle for freedom—the right to emigrate.

A few months ago, the travel plans of many Americans were disrupted when they were unable to acquire within a reasonable period of time U.S. passports that would allow them to travel abroad to certain regions. It was an inconvenience, but fortunately, the State Department with great effort cleared up the backlog and the waiting period is now back to around two months.

Now imagine waiting five, ten, or even fifteen years for a passport allowing you to leave the country.

Imagine not filling out an application and dropping it into the mail, but instead trudging from office to educational institution to police station seeking signatures from employers and various officials, without which the emigration office would not even consider the application to emigrate.

Imagine being told you can't leave, but not given any rational reason as to why not. Or being told that you cannot emigrate because of military service—in a construction unit!

Imagine taking to the streets with a sign demanding the right to reunify with one's family and loved ones abroad, as stipulated in the U.N. Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and being set upon by police and perhaps winding up in a forced labor camp or in internal exile in some tiny village in Siberia.

It may be hard to imagine, but this is what thousands of Soviet Jews faced when they wanted to emigrate to Israel from the former Soviet Union.

And why did Soviet Jews want to emigrate? Many of them were tired of the government anti-semitism that permeated the Soviet system, including a quota system for educational institutions. Understandably, they did not want their children to face these obstacles.

Many wished to practice their Jewish faith, to be able to attend a synagogue—if they could find one that hadn't been closed by the Communists—without having to worry that some Communist Party hack would see them and report them to their employers or teachers. Others were tired of the constant stream of anti-Semitic articles in the Soviet press parading as opposition to Zionism.

In 1967, with the Soviet press spewing tirades against Israel and alleged Zionist misdeeds in the wake of Israel's victory in the Six Day War, the Jewish emigration movement in the Soviet Union began in earnest. Many applicants, to be sure, were allowed to leave, but others were refused time and time again. The word "refusenik" was coined. Members of the Jewish community in the United States and throughout the world took up their cause. Others who cherished basic human rights, including Members of this body, joined in solidarity. Activists took part in demonstrations, wrote letters to Soviet officials, visited refuseniks in the Soviet Union, sent packages to imprisoned refuseniks, and never quit working on their behalf. It was an impressive demonstration of determination and unity.

And as this resolution notes, almost twenty years ago, on December 6, 1987, an estimated 250,000 persons demonstrated on the National Mall here in Washington on behalf of Soviet Jewish emigration as President Reagan prepared for a summit meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev. African Americans joined the rally in large numbers due in part to the active Jewish participation in the civil rights movement in the United States. One of these African American leaders eloquently expressed why so many non-Jews were there. He said, "As long as one Jew is kept against his will in the Soviet Union, we are all Jews."

A few years later, as the Soviet Union was collapsing and perestroika and glasnost became the watchwords, the barriers to Soviet Jewish emigration were lifted. Justice had at last prevailed.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution recognizes both the brave individuals who stood up to tyranny and demanded their right to freedom of movement, and those who vigorously campaigned on their behalf.

As Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I am honored to stand with my colleague and good friend, HENRY WAXMAN, in support of this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

#### HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA RECOVERY FACILITATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 29, 2007*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3247, the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Recovery Facilitation Act of 2007. This bill directs the President to increase to 90 percent the amount of Federal contributions for replacing any State or local government property damaged by the hurricanes. Enactment of this bill is critical if we are going to finally rebuild the historic and vital infrastructure in Mississippi and Louisiana.

This bill also addresses a variety of other issues of importance toward rebuilding communities in Mississippi and Louisiana including temporary housing for volunteers, debris removal program eligibility for Mississippi and Louisiana, providing for respectful care and interment of human remains damaged during the hurricanes, restoring certain public facilities and providing incentives for certain hazard mitigation projects. All of these are important steps toward rebuilding our vibrant Gulf Coast communities.

Madam Speaker, this bill is welcomed, as both Louisiana and Mississippi are still rebuilding from the damages caused by the storms. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in August that some communities are still without basic needs—such as schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure. In addition to these basic community needs, many are still without jobs because the doors of many businesses remain closed. Estimates from the Congressional Budget Office put, capital losses resulting from both hurricanes in the range of \$70 to \$130 billion. The GAO report further found that a substantial portion of the billions of dollars in assistance to the Gulf Coast was directed to short-term needs, leaving a smaller portion for long-term rebuilding. To date, the Federal government has provided most long-term rebuilding assistance to the Gulf Coast states through two key programs: FEMA's Public Assistance Program and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). Both States allocated a bulk of their CDBG funds to homeowner assistance, thus, creating a need for supplemental public assistance funds to focus on rebuilding and restoring critical infrastructure, such as government facilities, which funding this bill provides.

The increased assistance from the Federal government to Louisiana and Mississippi to rebuild their infrastructure through FEMA's public assistance program will help with the financial burden they face and will allow the process, which has thus far been daunting, to proceed more rapidly. This legislation is a step forward because it increases Federal assistance toward the rebuilding process and provides needed changes to the Stafford Act.

And, as we focus on rebuilding infrastructure in Louisiana and Mississippi, we must not forget that many of the child care facilities were damaged and even destroyed, while parents struggled to find a safe place to leave

their children while regrouping. Many child care facility owners are still waiting to hear from FEMA about financial assistance. Because I recognize the importance of emergency child care after a disaster, I introduced H.R. 2479, the Emergency Child Care Services Act, which was referred to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This bill would amend the Stafford Act to designate emergency child care as a "critical service" that is eligible to receive disaster assistance from FEMA. Recently, I have received calls from colleagues who represent areas affected by the California wildfires, inquiring about the bill's status. I am disappointed that the Emergency Child Care bill was not included in the bill debated on the floor today. It is my hope that my bill will be successfully passed out of Committee in the near future.

As Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee with oversight of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), of which FEMA is a part, our Committee works diligently to ensure that DHS and all of its components are prepared to respond to acts of terrorism, natural disasters and other emergencies. This bill will help rebuild our communities in both Louisiana and Mississippi and help with preparedness efforts for future incidents.

In closing, let me thank my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for their leadership on this legislation, and in particular, Ms. NORTON, who is also a member of the Committee on Homeland Security, for spearheading this effort. I look forward to working with Chairman OBERSTAR, Ms. NORTON and others on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to assure that our Federal disaster and post-terrorism response capabilities are at the level that the American people deserve. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

CONGRATULATING MR. ROBERT A. REYNOLDS, JR.

**HON. W. TODD AKIN**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 1, 2007*

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Robert A. Reynolds, Jr., an exceptional leader from my district in St. Louis, Missouri. Since 2000, Bob has served as President and CEO of Graybar Electric Co., Inc, a Fortune 500 company employing nearly 8,000 men and women at more than 250 distribution centers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

Prior to his election as Chairman of the Board at Graybar in 2001, Bob served in various capacities at the company. He joined Graybar in 1972 as an office salesman, was transferred to the Philadelphia unit as a sales representative in 1977 and was later appointed manager of the national consumer products accounts at corporate headquarters in 1979. After serving as a branch manager in New York and Connecticut, he was appointed district manager in Seattle. Bob eventually became Vice President of Communications Markets and Vice President of Communication and Data Business before he was named Senior Vice President of Electrical Business in 2000. During his tenure as President and CEO, Graybar was on the Fortune America's

Most Admired Companies list for six consecutive years.

Bob's leadership over the years has proven invaluable not only to Graybar, but to the community as a whole. He currently serves on the boards of the National Association of Electrical Distributors, the Boy Scouts of Greater Saint Louis, the United Way of Greater Saint Louis, the Saint Louis Club, the Log Cabin Club, Civic Progress of Saint Louis, and the Saint Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association. He is the former Chairman of the Board at the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW) and now serves as Past Chairman of the Board.

I am pleased to be able to honor Robert A. Reynolds, Jr. today. He is a remarkable example of the great leadership we have in Missouri and I know all of my colleagues join me in wishing he and his family the very best as he finishes his service at NAW.

#### FUND OUR VETERANS

**HON. THELMA D. DRAKE**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 1, 2007*

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, this is day 32. That is 32 days, so far, that our veterans have not had the use of the increased funding for their benefits and health care. That is \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. And why? Because the Democratic leadership has decided to not complete this bill and send it to the President, who has agreed to sign it.

In June this House passed this appropriation bill with a \$6 billion increase in a bipartisan manner. We were proud of our work and grateful to our veterans.

On September 6, the Senate completed their bill.

This work is done. Our veterans are not pawns in a political game. They are heroes.— Their sacrifices should not be used for more spending & more partisanship here in DC.

America expects us to get the job done. America expects us to provide the best care to our veterans.

Please join me in calling upon the Democratic leadership to put our veterans first and send this bill to the President now.

#### TRIBUTE TO NORTH FORT MYERS ELKS LODGE #2742

**HON. CONNIE MACK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 1, 2007*

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the North Fort Myers Elks Lodge # 2742 for their tireless and dedicated service to Southwest Florida's veterans.

The Elks are committed to the ideals of charity and patriotism and have a long tradition of supporting service projects throughout their local communities. No lodge fits this ideal better than the North Fort Myers Elks Lodge #2742, who will be recognized for their service to the Southwest Florida veterans community next week at the Florida Elks' State Convention in Orlando.

Since 1917, the Order of Elks has pledged to never forget our nation's veterans. The men

and women of the North Fort Myers Elks have taken the Elks' pledge to heart. Their record of service to the veterans of Southwest Florida is inspiring and worthy of commendation.

Over the last several years, the North Fort Myers Elks have served over 14,000 hot meals and provided over \$107,000 in food items, necessities and clothing to the region's homeless veterans; have logged over 90,000 miles transporting veterans to the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Bay Pines, Florida; and have repeatedly been recognized by the national Elks organization for their service to veterans, taking first place four years in a row.

We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who have served our country valiantly, and the North Fort Myers Elks have shown their community what compassion and service to our nation's veterans truly means.

I'm honored to represent these caring and hardworking individuals in Congress, and thank them for their efforts in making Southwest Florida a great place to live, work and visit.

HONORING DR. TERRY L. MARIS, OHIO VETERANS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

**HON. JIM JORDAN**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 1, 2007*

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, a ceremony in Columbus next week will mark the induction of 20 distinguished Ohioans into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. I am honored to commend to the House one of these inductees: Dr. Terry L. Maris of Hardin County.

Dr. Maris is an Army Special Operations veteran who served two combat tours in Vietnam. A Purple Heart recipient, he was awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Gold Star, and numerous other decorations for his valorous service.

Following his distinguished Army career, Dr. Maris put the leadership skills he honed in Vietnam to good use in the private sector, where he has compiled an admirable record in the fields of business research and teaching. As Dean of the College of Business at Ohio Northern University for 15 years, he oversaw the implementation of new instructional methods and cutting-edge teaching technologies to ensure that his students would best be prepared to succeed. He continues to serve as Executive Director of the Center for Cuban Business Studies, which he created to help people across the hemisphere lay the groundwork for relations with Cuba after the Castro regime.

Madam Speaker, selection for the Hall of Fame is a high honor accorded to only 20 Ohioans per year. To be considered for induction, individuals must not only serve the Nation honorably in the military, but also reflect the high value of service to others in their post-military careers.

In a letter recommending Dr. Maris for inclusion in the Hall, American Veterans Institute President Mike Jackson called him a "quiet hero" who has dedicated himself to educating future generations for the betterment of people everywhere. I am pleased to join in the accolades for Dr. Maris and his inestimable record